Ron Gough earns MMR 321

It all started when he was a kid running down to the station for the scheduled stop of the Milwaukee Road Hiawatha steam passenger train in Columbus, WI, a town of about 2,000. The excitement continued when his dad announced a trip on the train to visit relatives in South Dakota despite the fact he suffered motion sickness with the train just two miles out of town.

The hobby got its beginning when his dad built a Lionel layout complete with a concrete hard shell. Ron remembers the day he had to take a sledge hammer to it when the family moved to Delavan—a town with a seldom used branch line.

The evolution of diesel power dispelled a great deal of interest for many years, but a desire to model the steam era slowly emerged. He began with La Belle wood kits, with the intention of using the finished models on a layout to be built someday.

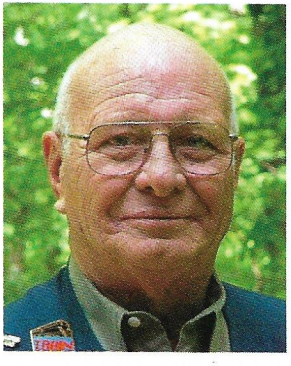
In 1995 doing some serious modeling and constructing a layout began to fill his thoughts. The process began in earnest when he joined the NMRA, attending the Crossroads Atlanta NMRA Convention and shortly thereafter got actively involved in the Atlanta Piedmont Division, the Southern Region.

Finally, after all the plotting and planning, plus the completion of various home projects including remodeling the basement, the National Southern Railroad (NSoRR) was started.

He figured as long as he was going to build it, it might as well conform to NMRA standards. As a result Ron became involved in the Achievement Program— "a logical extension as the means to learn and also to do things right the first time," he said.

Highlights on the road to MMR included being awarded his first Merit Award in Nov. of 1996; being the *Bulletin* NMRA National contest reporter at the 1998 Kansas City Convention; and earning back-to-back First Place awards in the structures off-line category at the Kansas City and St. Paul conventions.

Does having earned the distinction of being named a Master Model Railroader mean he knows everything about model railroading?



"Of course not," he said. "But I wish I did!"

"I continue to learn more about this hobby everyday from my NMRA friends, SER friends and especially from the folks of the Piedmont Division. In turn, I have been able to help and will continue to help fellow modelers."

With the passing of his wife, model railroading has taken on an even larger role. "Being distinguished as a Master Model Railroader is very, very special," he said.

Ron holds AP certificates in Cars, Structures, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Association Volunteer and Model Railroad Author.